California Sketched by a Rhode Islander

SOME Easterners get their impressions of Southern California by communing with other Easterners in transplanted Eastern hotels. Some, touring in winter, find perpetual rain; scraping pontoons of 'dobe mud from their shoes they hurry on, seeking another Ararat. Some go in the summer and return to picture a parched land of drought beyond the dreams even of Bill Anderson.

The average visitor's appraisal of the country, whether he rave for or against, is about as valuable as was the report of the three blind men of Hindustan who went to see the elephant. The only qualified scouts are those who stay several years at least, through good and bad, and get away from the big towns.

The Sloanes' bungalow is on an adobe hill near the Pacific and "one mile from a small town which has been brought up on the Declaration of Independence." They radiate from this as they please—two grown-ups, two boys and two dogs. We regret to note, but must for the sake of readers who may be looking for tips on self-support in Eden, that the family seems to have plenty of motors and spends nine months of the year in the fair but much moneyed city of Pasadena.

On their hilltop and in their rovings they have many small adventures, which Mrs. Sloane, who has an eye for comedy, relates most amusingly. She calls her sketches "a record of what happened to a fairly light hearted family who left New England in search of rest and health." They went for a year, but stay on and on. Mrs. Sloane explains: "I love the stone walls, huckleberry pies and johnny cakes of Rhode Island, and I love the associations of my childhood and my family tree, but there is something in the air of this part of the world that enchants me."

Here is one hint for household economists after all: "I think that in San Diego one can live better on a small income than anywhere in the country." which reminds us, irrelevantly, of a man who lived in San Diego quite a while ago and who, rebel against convention, planted his cook stove on the outside of his cabin and turned the stovepipe into the cabin. He was a poet, the author of this deathless verse:

"Where is the land of such balmy air
That works such a charm to the sick in the chair?
Where is the land of Agassiz' praises,
Evergreen trees and so many nice daisies?
In San Diego."

There are no outstanding daisies in recollections of a San Diego childhood; poppies, yellow violets and johnny-jump-ups, we should say. However, we think Mrs. Sloane will agree with us that the poet, whose name was Ben Judkins, caught the idea. Her book tells both sides of the truth for the Easterner and will please the real Californians too. Which is the highest praise. T. C.

THE SMILING HILL-TOP AND OTHER CALIFORNIA SKETCHES. By Julia M. Sloane. Illustrated by Carleton M. Winslow. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Hichens's Is Scarcely a Spiritualist's Novel

ROBERT HICHENS'S *Mrs. Marden* is just the book to round out the season's fictional harvest to which it properly belongs, although some may mistake it for an anti-spiritist weapon masquerading as a novel. Books and books we have had on spirits, human and alcoholic, but few have been novels. Mr. Hichens has given barely enough attention to the formation of characters to put his book within the desired and most popular pale. Mrs. Marden indeed is the only living soul in it. Some of the souls are necessarily disembodied; the rest have died prematurely on account of their creator's neglect. And yet you never lose the sense that this is a story which you are reading, and a remarkably readable one, too, in spite of all the weight being at one end.

Our minds are held unreservedly to the spiritual processes through which Mrs. Marden passed after the death of her son in battle. A frivolous and seemingly shallow-souled woman brought suddenly against an overwhelming grief seeks and finds consolation in psychical phenomena as purveyed by a popular medium. The extent to which London is given over to psychical research is hinted at in the diversity of the sitters about the medium's table. What a novelist puts into his novel cannot be taken for his own flesh and blood, so to speak. At the same time straws show—and taking Peter Orwin, the medium, as a straw pitifully broken by human suffering when the test came, it will naturally be supposed that Mr. Hichens is far from being a believer in table tipping, automatic writing, as well as rappings or "communications" of any other sort.

On the contrary, we have but to hark back in memory to *Bella Donna* and *The Garden of Allah* with their intricacies of corporeal description, and to the often ponderous enthusiasm with which Mr. Hichens conducts the mechanism of his stories, to know to the full how utterly he is wedded to the beliefs which have led to the writing of this novel, unexampled in simplicity and directness to the point of bareness. His treatment of the medium and the exposure of the caller's practices may make enthusiasts angry: the working out of Mrs. Marden's growth of soul following her disillusionment and a severe seizure of the deadly and well concealed disease from which the majority of women invalids in novels suffer will rejoice the religiously inclined.

The book as a whole will interest them all, spiritists, scientists and ecclesiasticists.

MRS. MARDEN. By Robert Hichens. George H. Doran Company.

Tastes of Drinkwater's Quality as a Lyrist

WHEN Mr. John Drinkwater confines himself to pure lyricism he is generally able to produce delicate and suggestive bits that may rank with the best of contemporary poetry. But his excursions into philosophic fields grow heavy footed at times, too many of his conclusions are trite, and although his lines are always marked by a certain literary excellence he fails to hold the reader as he should.

Poems, which must not be considered a complete collection but rather an extremely generous selection from the half dozen volumes that have gone before, contains a surprisingly large number of very readable pieces. It is quite easy to skip the didacticism as one approaches it and go on to the singing lines—which carry more real philosophy than the more evident attempts in that direction. A poem like the following, *Symbols*, with its Blakelike notes of mystery, is worth a dozen pieces similar to *The Fires of God*:

I saw history in a poet's song,
In a river reach and a gallows hill,
In a bridal bed, and a secret wrong,
In a crown of thorns: in a daffodil.

I imagined measureless time in a day,
And starry space in a waggon road,
And the treasure of all good harvests lay
In a single seed that the sower sowed.

My garden wind had driven and havened again
All ships that ever had gone to sea,
And I saw the glory of all dead men
In the shadow that went by the side of me.

Any poet capable of a verse as good as the concluding one in that poem deserves to be read with some attention, for the authentic substance of poetry is in it. Another—*Birthright* by title:

Lord Rameses of Egypt sighed
Because a summer evening passed;
And little Ariadne cried
That summer fancy fell at last
To dust; and young Verona died
When Beauty's hour was overcast.

Theirs was the bitterness we know
Because the clouds of hawthorn keep
So short a state, and kisses go
To tombs unfathomably deep,
While Rameses and Romeo
And little Ariadne sleep.

There is a Wordsworthian note in some of Mr. Drinkwater's poetry and he is quite successful in rendering the English countryside with its magic of bird and bush. A number of rhythmical character sketches, among which may be especially noted *Mad Tom Tatterman*, have their poetic values. The longer pieces, such as *The Carver in Stone*, do not appear to be so successful, although they always maintain dignity and elevated utterance. In view of the fact of the immediate production of Mr. Drinkwater's *Lincoln* in America this season there should be a renewed interest in his poetry, especially among those who remember his contributions to the various volumes of "Georgian Poetry" during the last few years.

H. S. G.

POEMS. By John Drinkwater. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

T. R. Liked W. A. Fraser's Tales, and No Wonder!

IN W. A. Fraser's *Bulldog Carney* there are collected a half dozen tales with a setting just north of the United States-Canadian border. The six stories, of all of which Bulldog Carney is the central figure, are done decidedly well. Mr. Fraser evidently knows the great Northwest, its Indians, its famous Royal Northwest Mounted Police and its white men.

The story we liked best is *Owners Up*. It is a story of horse racing, the only sport the town of Walla Walla knew beside faro, the wheel game and a shooting tournament. Racing was one means of trimming the foolhardy Indians and whites right down to their shirts, and at times was slightly crooked. But it began to be more so when Iron Jaw and two associates booked a race between a horse that was played up as a cow pony with a jockey palmed off on the public as a cow puncher from Texas, and Clatawa, a really fast horse owned by Snaky Dick, a truly honest citizen. But Billy, a young man from the States, who was in that territory for his chest's sake, recognized Bulldog Carney's Buckskin as an old steeplechase horse. At any rate the Buckskin was booked for the race, and even though every one knew and respected the owner of the Buckskin they did not bet their money on him. Nevertheless he won—but that isn't the story, and it wouldn't do to give it away.

All are good stories. Col. Roosevelt's congratulation to Mr. Fraser upon his tales because they were "frankly tales" is recommendation enough.

BULLDOG CARNEY. By W. A. Fraser. George H. Doran Company.

LINDA CONDON

By JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

"reveals another phase of his surprising power as a novelist . . . perhaps the deepest and most remarkable study of character which he has as yet prepared . . . concerned with the mind and soul of a womanhood early to flower, marked by an outer perfection of loveliness which conceals a ceaseless struggle for self-comprehension and self-expression."

E. W. OSBORNE in THE NEW YORK WORLD.

ALFRED A. KNOPF. Publisher

UP and DOWN

E. F. Benson

Author of "An Autumn Sowing"

As a genuine chronicle of one man's devotion to another, a devotion so strong that death seemed only a bond which held them closer together; UP AND DOWN shows a new phase of Mr. Benson's many-sided genius.

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

Love, Mystery, Action

The GIRL in the MIRROR

By ELIZABETH JORDAN

A FASCINATING love and mystery story which, according to the San Francisco Chronicle, "is full of action and as speedy as a machine gun." (A Century book. At all bookstores. $1.60.)

Valentine's Manual of Old New York

HENRY COLLINS BROWN, Editor.

"I pray you let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and the things of fame
That do renown this city."

Sent for Booklet 15 East 40th Street, New York, or all booksshops.

Auntie Sue's Philosophy of Life Re-Created Brian Kent

Harold Bell Wright

created the sweetest character in fiction in Auntie Sue. The author knows life and how we live it or he could never have made Brian Kent, Auntie Sue, Judy and Betty Jo the actual, living human beings they are and put them down in the mystic, enchanted Ozarks to live in this story

THE RE-CREATION OF BRIAN KENT

Cloth, 12mo.—$1.50—Illustrated

Nearly One Million Copies Already Sold

The story is as sweet and clean and wholesome as the atmosphere of the out-of-doors of God's unspoiled world of the Ozark hills. The story carries a message of comfort and hope and courage and confidence. There are thrilling incidents related with such vivid realism that one reads with breathless interest. And yet the fascinating power of the story is rather in the skillful visualization of the clash and conflicts of life's invisible forces out of which the thrilling incidents come.

Other Books by Harold Bell Wright

That Printer of Udell's—The Shepherd of the Hills—The Calling of Dan Matthews—The Winning of Barbara Worth—Their Yesterdays—The Eyes of the World—When a Man's a Man

Over Eight Million Sold—Buy Them Anywhere

Publishers, The Book Supply Company, Chicago

The France I Know

By WINIFRED STEPHENS

The author of this charming collection of pictures of French life and thought of today knows France as few English-speaking people do. Personally familiar not only with the country itself, but with its literature and its leading men, Miss Stephens has enjoyed unusual opportunities and used them to the full for our enlightenment. $4.00

Postage extra. Order of your own Bookseller or E. P. DUTTON & CO. 681 Fifth Ave., New York